

Social Security Reporting Requirements

Fact Sheet 2023

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Dual (both SSI and SSDI) beneficiaries, must consistently report their gross monthly earnings (earnings before taxes) to their local Social Security Field office.

When to report?

SSI & Dual: Total gross monthly work earnings, or any other income received in the previous month, must be reported by the 6th of every month.

SSDI: Unlike SSI, SSDI beneficiaries only have to report total gross monthly earnings from work, but not necessarily every month. Earnings must be reported for the first calendar month worked and for any month total gross monthly earnings meet or exceed \$970 in 2022. Reporting should be done when paid for all the days in the previous month. Contact the local Social Security Field office to learn how often to report.

How can monthly wages be reported?

Contact Social Security when starting a job by calling either the local Social Security Field office or the National 800 Number at 1-800-772-1213.

Once the employer has been entered into the Social Security system, it will be possible to access one of the following reporting options:

SSI Telephone Wage Reporting: This is a toll-free, automated phone system that allows beneficiaries to report monthly wages over the phone. Remember, when calling into an automated phone system, it is important to speak clearly, carefully and in a quiet location. This is key to making this option successful.

SSI Mobile Wage Reporting: This free smartphone application can be used to report wages by those with an Apple or Android mobile device.

Online Reporting: To use this online reporting tool, a *My Social Security Account* is required. To create an account, visit www.ssa.gov. Once created, a link will be available on the profile page to report wages. It will be possible to save and print a receipt of what was reported. Social Security will send a letter within 5 business days acknowledging that the wage report was processed.

Postal Mailing (SSI, SSDI or Dual): Beneficiaries can report by sending a letter and copies of their pay-stubs via postal mail. Certified mail is the most reliable form of mailing, but there is a cost.

In-Person Delivery (SSI, SSDI or Dual): Beneficiaries can report by bringing copies of their paystubs to their local Social Security Field Office.

Note: Visit www.ssa.gov to sign-up online to receive a monthly email or text message wage reporting reminder.

Besides wages, what else should be reported?

Below is a list of other items that must be immediately reported to Social Security:

- Starting or stopping work
- Significant wage increases or decreases
- Applying for work incentives
- Mailing address or bank account changes
- Medical improvement
- Minor dependent additions (SSDI)
- Living situation or marital status changes (SSI)
- 30-day hospitalizations, incarcerations, or homeless shelter stays (SSI)
- Other income, (e.g., workers' compensation, cash gifts, lottery winnings, unemployment benefits) (SSI)

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Overall Reporting Best Practices:

- Along with gross earnings, all other items stated above must also be reported.
- Provide the Representative Payee's Social Security Number (SSN) when reporting.
- Request Social Security send a receipt or a formal letter documenting what was reported.
- Be sure to report consistently and on time to avoid overpayments or underpayments.
- Contact Social Security to apply for work incentives. Provide appropriate documents, (i.e., receipts), when requested.
- Dual beneficiaries must follow reporting requirements for both SSI and SSDI benefits.

How do overpayments occur?

Overpayments may occur when Social Security pays beneficiaries more than what should have been paid. This usually happens as a direct result of Social Security and beneficiary-record discrepancies, or from a beneficiary failing to report in an accurate and timely manner.

How will I know I have an overpayment?

When an overpayment is detected, Social Security will mail the beneficiary and the Representative Payee a Notice of Overpayment prior to withholding any funds from cash benefits. This dated letter will explain the reason and list the amount that has been overpaid. It also provides repayment options, as well as appeal and waiver rights. The beneficiary typically has 10 days to respond.

What are the repayment options?

- **For SSDI beneficiaries**, Social Security will withhold the full amount of the monthly cash benefit, unless a lesser withholding amount was

requested and approved. Withholding usually starts 30 days after the Notice was mailed.

- **For SSI beneficiaries**, Social Security will withhold 10% of the maximum federal benefit rate received each month, unless a lower or higher payback rate is requested. Withholding usually starts 60 days after the Notice was mailed.
- **For former SSI beneficiaries who now receive SSDI**, Social Security can withhold up to 10% of the SSDI cash benefit to repay the SSI overpayment.
- **For former SSI and/or SSDI beneficiaries**, any outstanding overpayments can be repaid within 30 days by check or the local office can be contacted to set up a monthly installment payment plan.

What if I agree to pay it back, but never do?

If the beneficiary fails to pay back an overpayment, Social Security will recover those funds from their federal tax return, wages, or future Social Security benefits. This will also be reflected on their credit report.

What if I don't think I'm at fault or can't repay it?

If this is the case, request a waiver at any time by filing a Request for Waiver of Overpayment Recovery or Change in Repayment Rate (Form SSA-632). This form will require proof that the overpayment is unjust, that the beneficiary was not at fault, and that repaying it would be a financial burden. Supporting documentation used to provide evidence of income and expenses, may be requested.

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What if I don't agree?

Those who do not agree with what the Notice of Overpayment states, will have 60 days after receiving the letter to file an appeal. Specifically, a Request for Reconsideration (Form SSA-561). All appeals must be in writing and should explain why the overpayment, or the amount, is incorrect. Social Security will mail the beneficiary a notice of the reconsideration determination. If the outcome is unsatisfactory, a Request for Hearing can be filed.

Overpayment Tips & Best Practices:

- Accurate and timely reporting can prevent overpayments. If something is unclear in the Notice of Overpayment, seek help.
- To prevent premature withholdings of cash benefits, file an appeal or waiver within 10 days of receiving the Notice of Overpayment.
- Forms SSA-561 and SSA-632 are available online at www.ssa.gov/forms/
- Social Security will delay withholding funds until a decision has been made about the appeal or waiver request.
- Social Security will often grant a waiver request for overpayment when amounts are less than \$2,000.

For more information about

Work Without Limits Benefits Counseling

call toll-free

1-877-YES-WORK
(1-877-937-9675)

or visit

workwithoutlimits.org